

## F-16 Fighter USAF

By Alexander Kutovenko

In this edition we are taking to the skies. My subject is the sleek F-16 Fighter as flown by the USAF. Although this craft first took to the air some 36 years ago, this lethal platform remains an integral part of the US air arsenal. The model is from Kinetic, the two-seat variant of the craft. Before I begin, there are a few points about my approach that I'd like to touch upon; first, I believe in using layers to create effects, effects should look natural and somewhat random - avoid symmetry, and finally don't be afraid to "over-do it", as many times this works to tell a better story and make the model more attractive.





1

With the kit assembled, I can begin painting by giving the model and overall coating of AMMO grey primer. I prefer using this neutral color because now I have a nice background to individually darken or lighten certain areas or panels without worrying about competing colors.



2

I did the pre-shading done using Black, a very reliable paint when doing fine lines. Also, I've used a 0.2 fine needle because plane have a lot of small narrow panels to take care of and I don't want a lot of over-spray.

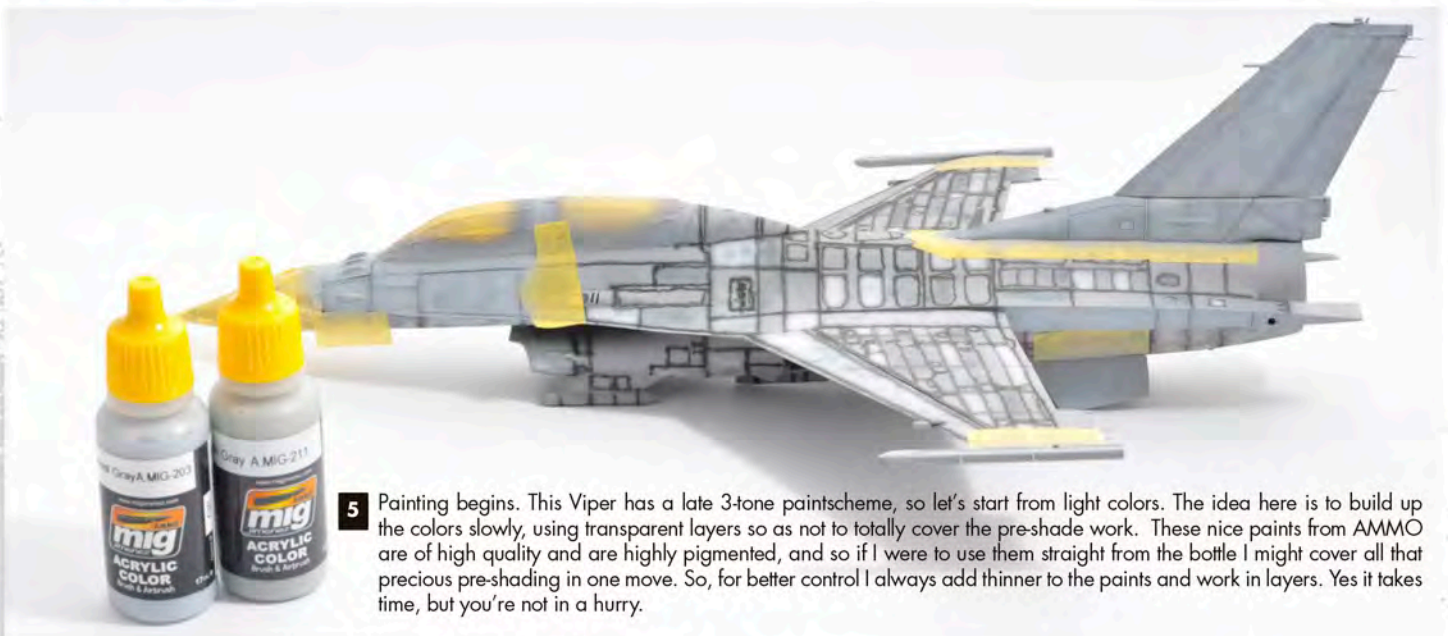


3

Continuing with the pre-shade, I randomly work with the individual random panels to give color variation and some irregularity to achieve a worn and weathered appearance as seen in reference photos. I also add some streaks using an airbrush near the movable parts of wings.



4 The underside receives the same attention to the panels, however, in certain areas I add a little color to the pre-shade to begin the first foundation layers of heat and exhaust stains.



5 Painting begins. This Viper has a late 3-tone paintscheme, so let's start from light colors. The idea here is to build up the colors slowly, using transparent layers so as not to totally cover the pre-shade work. These nice paints from AMMO are of high quality and are highly pigmented, and so if I were to use them straight from the bottle I might cover all that precious pre-shading in one move. So, for better control I always add thinner to the paints and work in layers. Yes it takes time, but you're not in a hurry.



Undersides. Again, add a little thinner and try not to completely cover pre-shaded areas. It's like a path for you.



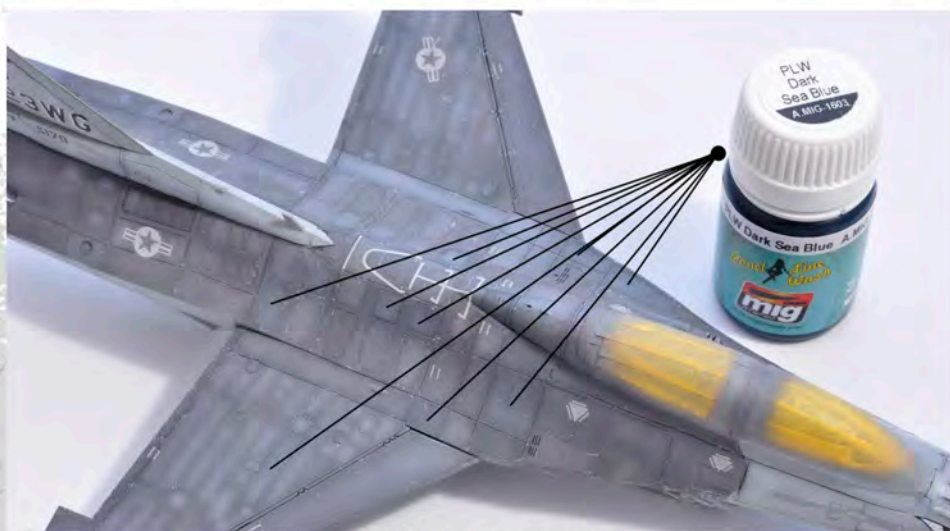
The most awesome color is the dark gray. When this layer was done and dry I said to myself "Wow, that's exactly F-16 shade!" Now, to lighten up random panels some of the dark gray was mixed with FS36270 Medium Gray. Some panel was lighted more some less, just for color variation.



After finishing with the paintwork, all of the surfaces were sealed with AMMO gloss varnish and then left to dry 2 days. Because of its acrylic resin base, its important that the varnish be permitted at least 1 day for drying before applying the decals - otherwise, you may face some unpleasant results.



To bring show more wear and the used condition of the plane, let's add some chips. Using logic, I used the lightest gray color from the set to make some chips on needed areas such as near gun bay, movable parts, corners and panel edges. This panels are interchanged sometimes during maintenance so chips and color difference is normal.



Now I begin with the washes in order give color variation. I begin by using 1603 PLW Blue Wash on random panels to give them bluish shade. I leave this to dry overnight and then gently remove the excess with cotton swab. Now the gray has smooth, blue shade.



**11** The same blue wash goes on underside and external fuel tanks. As you can see, the surface details provide the "map" as to where to add the effects.



**12** For upper surfaces I found that PLW A.MIG.1618, Deep Brown, is the ideal color for this situation. It's dark enough to bring out details, where a black wash would be too dark and not appear realistic.



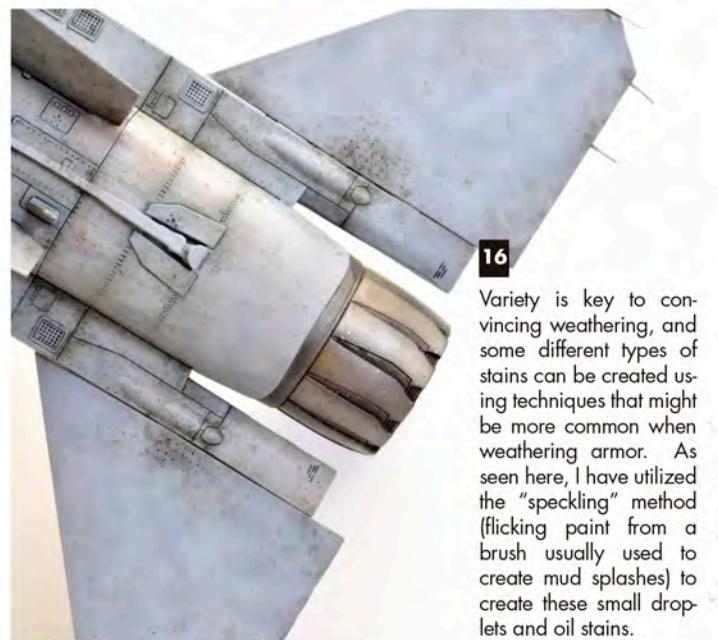
**13** Now it's time for adding dirt and grime, but before I do that I spray the model with matt varnish so that the surface has some "tooth" for the effects to stick to.



**14** Again, using the same Blue Colored PLW A.MIG.1603 wash as before, I add stains and grime to the underside of the aircraft. I concentrate the application near panel lines, lower areas, corners, rivets and all other logical areas. Excess wash can be cleaned using a clean brush moistened with thinners. This process takes time but the results are nice and gives a great look to model.



**15** The same process to create grime and dirt was used on the upper surfaces. Over the dark grey I used the Deep Brown wash again on logical places. I concentrated the effects on the wings, gun bay and spine panels; less so on the rear.



**16** Variety is key to convincing weathering, and some different types of stains can be created using techniques that might be more common when weathering armor. As seen here, I have utilized the "speckling" method (flicking paint from a brush usually used to create mud splashes) to create these small droplets and oil stains.



I used this same method to create stains on the fuel tanks, flicking diluted A.MIG-1409 Fuel Stains effects to indicate small spills and splashes.



And finally I apply streaks as the final part of the aircrafts weathering. Again, I need to use logic when applying them to areas such as near the engine and landing gear and the hydraulicmechanism of wings. It's best to add a few streaks at a time, allow them to dry – then determine if more are needed.

*See you again! Bye!*

